



News from
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Reps. Pitts, Weldon call for full refund from cloning firm, no further grants

HHS says Advanced Cell Technology misappropriated funds

Washington—Congressmen Joe Pitts (R, PA-16) and Dave Weldon (R, FL-15) are sending a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson urging stronger sanctions against a Massachusetts cloning firm that has misappropriated nearly \$150,000 in National Institutes of Health grant money. The firm, ACT Technology, has not been able to prove that it did not use taxpayer money to clone human embryos.

“When we wrote to Secretary Thompson in December, we wanted to make sure these grants weren’t being used to free up more of ACT’s own money for human cloning,” said Congressman Pitts. “Now, we’ve discovered that ACT is unable to show they didn’t use taxpayer money directly on cloning. We are gravely concerned. We want an immediate, total refund from ACT and no further grants at all to companies involved in unethical research.”

ACT announced in November of 2001 that it had cloned human embryos.

Congressmen Pitts and Weldon are collecting signatures from colleagues today on a letter to Secretary Tommy Thompson. The letter says, “ACT may have used taxpayer funds to subsidize its human cloning activities, but since its accounting records are so poor, the HHS inspector general cannot find any ‘evidence.’ Mr. Secretary, this is by no means an exoneration of ACT nor proof positive that taxpayer funds should be entrusted to these human cloners.”

HHS has already determined that a majority of grant money spent to date has been misappropriated. “This is unacceptable,” the letter says. “ACT should be required not only to return the \$150,000 in misappropriated funds, but ACT should be required to refund the entire \$214,146 that it has received thus far from NIH and should be prevented from receiving any more of the nearly \$2 million in NIH grants awarded in September 2000. Based on these troubling reports, ACT should not receive any future grants from HHS or other government agencies.”

The text of the Pitts-Weldon letter as well as the HHS Inspector General’s report and other documents are available at www.house.gov/pitts.

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